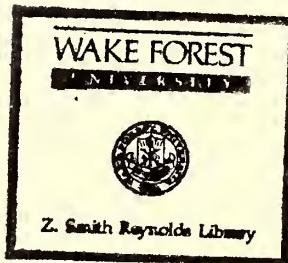


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HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
MORGANTON, NORTH CAROLINA
AND
PERSONAL REMINISCENCES
1879 - 1956

MAUD PATTON ANTHONY

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Maud Patton Anthony

1884 - 1968



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THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH GREATFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE WORK OF MAUD PATTON ANTHONY, LONG TIME MEMBER OF THIS CHURCH, HER DAUGHTER, JEANNE ANTHONY DYER AND ELIZABETH H. MICHAELS, CURRENT MEMBER AND PAST CHAIRMAN OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY COMMITTEE AND HER DAUGHTER REBECCA MICHAELS ANDERSON, IN MAKING POSSIBLE THE PUBLICATION OF THIS HISTORY.

EDITED FOR PUBLICATION
BY
JEANNE ANTHONY DYER
1995

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Little, if anything, has ever appeared in print about the personal life and career accomplishments of Maud Patton Anthony, author of this church history. She was very humble and never sought to call attention to herself.

Maud Elizabeth Patton was born in Caldwell County, North Carolina, at The Globe on April 25, 1884. She was the third of six children born to the Rev. Robert Logan and Margaret Spainhour Patton. Religion and education were always foremost in her life. Devotion to these fundamental values was instilled during her formative years, particularly by her father, who was both teacher and Baptist minister. Between 1888 and 1901, he served four periods as pastor of Morganton First Baptist Church. From her earliest memories, a living Christian faith and the church were a dominant force in her personal life and remained so throughout her days.

The exact date of her baptism is not known, but she once remarked, "Joe [her brother] and I thought long and hard about taking that step. In those days it was a real trial and tribulation, for grown boys from out in town would stand on the Catawba River Bridge, spitting and jeering while baptizings were taking place below." Sometime between 1895 and 1898, Maud Patton became a member of First Baptist Church in Morganton. Her early years were formative ones in the life of the First Baptist Church, too, and her exceptional memory served her well in recalling significant events.

Her pre-college education was received at the feet of her father in the Patton academies. A renowned Burke County educator, Robert Logan Patton directed the training of his daughter's mind with meticulous care and strict discipline. He intended for her to acquire a thorough education with the necessary skills to lead an outstanding and dedicated life of service. When members of the entrance board of the Normal and Collegiate Institute in Asheville were examining her Latin skills, an inquiry was made as to her teachers. She replied, "Only my father," to their amazement. Throughout her life no one ever doubted her keen intellect and zealous energy. She became valedictorian of her class at the Normal and Collegiate Institute where she was formally prepared for the teaching profession. She began her teaching career near Morganton, at Table Rock Academy, which her father had established some years earlier.

She became the wife of Thomas Winfield Anthony, also member of a pioneer Burke County family, at the age of 23. Five children were born to this union before the untimely death of her husband in 1928. She was a widow for 40 years, and during most of this time, continued in her professional duties, in addition to rearing a family.

Known throughout the Burke County and Morganton school systems simply as "Mrs. Anthony," she taught at virtually every level. She also served as school principal, the first supervisor of schools in Burke County, and taught in the first teacher institutes, early State-sponsored efforts at teacher training. In the years of 1924 and 1925, as a history teacher, she authored and produced an outdoor pageant portraying Burke County history. Staged in natural amphitheaters, this massive production drew hundreds of spectators, and all 600 school children in the Morganton schools participated. Widely acclaimed throughout the State, "The Birthright" probably touched more lives than any other single achievement of her career.

She always found enterprising ways to utilize her summers, ever accepting new challenges. Her brother, R.L. Patton, longtime superintendent of schools in Burke County and life-long resident of Morganton, provided the opportunity for her to engage in several endeavors. Soon after the death of her husband, Mrs. Anthony, with her youngest child, less than three years old, and her trustworthy family helper, "Aunt" Ella Tucker, set out for a remote plateau area in Burke County. Living primitively and teaching in a one-room abandoned church house for two summers, she opened to the children of the area's isolated families a world of both religious and secular material.

From 1933 to 1936, Mrs. Anthony organized and operated a work-study program at Rutherford College, enabling a considerable number of young people to acquire a measure of education beyond what was available to them during those Depression years. She utilized several members of her family, as well as students, in carrying out this self-supported, hands-on project that offered a junior college curriculum. Shortly thereafter, this remarkable woman, along with her two youngest children, spent the summer at Mills Home in Thomasville. There she authored a second pageant, "One Fair Dream," dramatizing the history of the Baptist orphanage.

She continued teaching in Morganton until 1949. Then, after a brief retirement period, Mrs. Anthony returned to teaching for three more years, this time at Jonas Ridge, before permanently leaving the education field in the 1950's. She left Morganton in the late 1950's to live with her daughter, Margaret (Mrs. Dixon A.) Lackey, in Decatur, Georgia, where she remained until her death in 1968.

It was during the seventh decade of her life that Mrs. Anthony undertook writing her reminiscences that were so uniquely tied to the history of First Baptist Church. She was a lifelong member, taught the Ladies' Sunday School Class for many years, and was active and instrumental in the growth of the Catawba River Association. While she utilized personal and written interviews and researched minutes of the Church and Catawba River Association, the bulk of her manuscript embodies her own personal recollections. With a life that had been intertwined so closely with First Baptist Church from the beginning in her parents' home, it was fitting that she pen these reminiscences for all time.

Minimal revisions and additions have been made to the original manuscript, completed in 1956, to bring it forward for printing in 1995. Factual details of persons, dates, and events remain as she recorded them.

The effort, support, and encouragement of Elizabeth Michaels to bring this history to light are acknowledged with gratitude. The support of the History and Archives Committee of First Baptist Church is appreciated. We are indebted to Becky Michaels Anderson for dedicating her time and skilled work to converting the original manuscript for printing. Delce Dyer was invaluable in helping to organize the material and making helpful suggestions.

Now, 39 years later, and as her only surviving child, my role has been to join in that publication effort.

Jeanne Anthony Dyer
June 1995

PROLOGUE

This historical sketch is of events, some of which are of importance, small though they may have been at the time, but far-reaching in their influence as they yet touch and bless the lives of many of the present generation of those, who, today, are proud to call themselves members of the First Baptist Church of Morganton, North Carolina.

With reverence we salute the memory of the godly men and women who are asleep; who gave of their zealous prayers, who gave of their lives the best, who gave of their often meager incomes. These gifts burned upon the altar of real sacrifice until the remembrance of them - the deeds, the gifts, the prayers, the lives of these early Christians - has indeed become as a precious incense, a beautiful memory.

And so, the writer wishes humbly to revive, first of all, in this history of our Church, some of the happenings of the days that are gone; and secondly, to recall from the past the names of some of the men and women whom God used in those early days to light the flickering torch of the Baptist church in these parts, a Light which, please God, once lit shall burn until Time shall be no more.

Maud Patton Anthony
Morganton, North Carolina
1956

EARLY MINISTERS OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH

As far back as 1814, Rev. Thomas Carlton was travelling around on horseback, finding his way among the Baptist people throughout this section. Rev. Robert H. Moody seems to have been instrumental in gathering together and really organizing the Baptist Church in this region, along with Rev. Needham Bryan Cobb. We shall speak later of Rev. Cobb as the first pastor of our own little Church in Morganton. J.C. Grayson was another preacher of the old days; he was clerk of the association from 1829 to 1839, preaching the annual sermon in the latter year. The name of Broad River Baptist Association, near Head of the Yadkin, was changed to the Catawba River Association in 1829 and has had an unbroken history since that time.

In 1832, J.C. Grayson preached the annual associational sermon at Smyrna Church.

The names also of such men as R.B. Jones and Rev. L.L. Sherwood should be recalled as being among these pioneer Baptist ministers, as well as Thomas Craig and Joab Moore.

James H. Spainhour, a brother of Joseph F. Spainhour, was a brilliant young preacher who had forged out and attended Wake Forest College. He was church clerk in the association in the years 1857 and 1858 and in 1859 he preached the annual sermon. Only four years were to pass until, at the beginning of the Civil War, he served as a chaplain, 1st N.C. State Troops, in the Confederate Army. He lost his life near a battlefield in Virginia. A brother, Rufus, brought his body home for burial in an Army wagon. The body was packed in charcoal in a wooden box to preserve it for the long trip home. Rev. James Spainhour was buried at the old graveyard near Smyrna Church of which he was a member. His name should be added to these pioneer preachers though his life was brief.

These names, presented here, no church of this section should ever forget. These men helped by their godly lives and preaching firmly to plant the seed of the Baptist churches in Burke County and elsewhere.

OUR EARLY CHURCH

Where¹ the tiny group which composed the charter members met in 1879 to found our church is unknown. The members are all dead and the earliest records we have preserved are for the year 1883. When the small church building was erected, there is no data. (These earlier records may have been lost when the church was burned.)

However, the First Baptist Church of Morganton had its beginning, as far as we know, in the small frame structure, painted white, with a small steeple, and of course with one room, a tiny organ, a wood stove to heat the building, and with oil lamps to light it. This building stood on North Sterling Street at the intersection of Queen Street. After the church burned, the lot was sold and the money from the sale was put in the new building fund. The Boger home was built on this site, known for many years as the "Boger Corner." In recent years this old family home has been removed and the lot is now occupied by the Northwestern Bank.

The Church was organized in 1879 and although we are unable to find the exact number of its initial members we know it was a mere handful. We also know that M.P. Hildebran, then a young man, was a member. Mr. and Mrs. M.D. Brittain from Mt. Home Church were among this number along with their daughter, Sallie Brittain, about 20 years old at the time, who married W. E. Walton in 1880. Mr. Walton did not join the Baptist Church until some years later; he led a devout life and was a deacon for many years. They brought up their six children in the Church. Mrs. Walton died June 1, 1937. The lives of these two were outstanding in their piety and usefulness, not only in the early days but also in a later period of the Church. Surely many of their prayers and blessings are seen today in the life of their daughter, Elizabeth Walton Walker.

Rev. N.B. Cobb served as pastor of the Church from its founding in 1879 to 1886.² J.A. Cox [*G.A. Cox in original manuscript*], who owned a farm adjoining the old Spainhour home near what is now called Clear Water Beach Road, was the first treasurer; his home church, as well as that of his wife Phoebe, had been old Smyrna. They had moved to town where Mr. Cox had a store; they too were among the charter members.

As the years pass we find the family of Mr. and Mrs. Bela E. Cox affiliating themselves with our Church, raising their children in its midst. And so, from the very foundation until the present day, the records show the Cox name and the entire family of the late Bela Cox, the eldest son, as part of our membership.

Rev. N.B. Cobb must have been a man outstanding in leadership as well as godliness. We recall our mother speaking often of this man's great piety and dedication to his work. We find the struggling young Church under his ministry, four years from its birth, reporting a church roll of 39 members giving a total of \$167.40. The pastor's salary for the year 1883-1884 was \$144.53; the rest of the amount was used for other expenses itemized with meticulous care by Mr. J.A. Cox [*G.A. Cox in original manuscript*] The latter included such items as janitor service (50 cents per month or \$6 per year), the cost of wood to heat the church (75 cents a load and 25 cents for cutting it), the oil for the church lamps (15 cents a

gallon, later 20 cents), an occasional lamp chimney (5 cents), and the price of the quaint old notebook in which the records were so carefully kept for a number of years (20 cents). The members with their pledges were all listed as also were the "envelope collections." For example, March 2, 1884, "envelope collection" was 75 cents; on May 12, 1884, it was 83 cents.³

In 1885, the Church was giving to Foreign Missions and to Ministerial Education, and in 1886 also to State Missions.

Mr. Cobb was pastor for seven years, from 1879 to 1886.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN 1883

M.D. Brittain*	N.L. Beach
Mrs. M.D (Minerva) Brittain*	Mrs. N.L. Beach
J.A. Cox*	Rev. J.A. Rector
Mrs. J.A. (Phoebe) Cox*	Mrs. J.A. Rector
Mrs. William (Sallie) Walton*	Finley Rector
M.P. Hildebran	Theodosia Rector
Mrs. M.P. Hildebran	Simeon Rector
E.S. Whisenant*	Pruella Rector
Mrs. E.S. Whisenant*	A.J. Shull
A.P. Chandler	Cornelius Shull
Mrs. A.P. Chandler	Mrs. Cornelius Shull
John Whisenant	Mrs. Mary Shull
Mrs. John Whisenant	Mrs. Sam Herron
Mrs. J.C. McNeeley	Mrs. H. Odell
Mrs. B.J.R. -- (?)	Mrs. Sid Powell
Hamp Williams	Mrs. William Beach
Mrs. Hamp Williams	J.T. Perkins [<i>Perkins in original</i>] (Glen Alpine)
Mrs. William Walls	Mrs. Dempsey Powell (Mitchell)
Dr. Osborne	Mrs. W. Gray Turner
Mrs. Osborne	

* Charter member of record

(Note: Although W.G. Turner was not a member he always contributed generously to the Church. The names of Rosalia and Florence Rector seem to have been added a little later than the parents and older members of the family.)

Rev. G.W. Gardner was the second pastor from 1887 to 1888. New families moving to Morganton and vicinity in the late 80's added to the church roll among others the names of the following:

Eliza Burgess [<i>Burgis in original</i>]	Mrs. M.E. Battle
Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Walker	P.F. Simmons
T.A. Clark	R. B. Brittain
W.G. Burgess [<i>Burgis in original</i>]	J. L. Duckworth
Samuel Huffman	A.W. Smith
Mrs. Samuel Huffman	H.L. Odell
Mrs. Lizzie Moore (near Bridgewater)	J. Waits Mull
R.S. Amos	R.L. Bailey
J.H. Amos	A.R. Buffaloe
E.A. Powe	Eli Newton [<i>Neuton in original</i>]
W.H. Hardin	Mrs. Eli Newton

The sexton's wages seem to have gone up to \$1 a month. His duties are listed now as "Sexton ringing the bell." The price of wood for the church stove remains at "75 cents a load and 25 cents for cutting." On August 18, 1886, Fred Odell was paid 50 cents for "repairing the church organ."

In 1886, \$12.15 was paid to State Missions. The donations to Foreign Missions in 1887 included \$1.09 by "little Sunday School children" and \$2.50 by the "Ladies Mission Society." This same year "\$12.00 was sent to the association by S. Huffman for the orphanage." On September 30, 1887, "\$5 was paid to the Evangelist C.J. Woodson." Again in the same year, "\$29.08 was paid out for a church carpet" and "\$1.25 for planing seats." Entire disbursements for pastor's salary during the year 1887 from January to January were \$100.

The Rev. Mr. Gardner was succeeded in the year 1888 - 1889 by R.L. Patton, who was now living at North Catawba where he had established a thriving school called "Amherst Academy." It had attracted a number of young men who had followed their teacher there from schools he had started before this time. Mr. Patton, with his heavy school duties and also serving as pastor of the North Catawba Church during this period, supplied the Morganton church for about a year while it was without a regular pastor. Little did anyone dream that one of the country fellows, working at Amherst Academy at this time, studying, debating, laying the foundation for public speaking, was to become the great preacher, the memory of whom the Catawba River Association as well as the Morganton church will never forget - the beloved Rufus Bradshaw.

Among the new families moving in during this period and affiliating themselves with our Church was that of J.H. Walker. Mr. Walker, father of Kita McGalliard, Charlie, Elsie, and Tiena, moved from Collettsville to Morganton in the late 80's and Mr. and Mrs. Walker and Kita belonged to the Church before it burned. Mr. Walker, for a number of years, in this early period, taught a class of small girls in Sunday School. The writer belonged to this class. Mr. Walker also served for many years as deacon. (Tiena Walker supplied the above information as well as the following about the Odell family.) Hattie Coffey Connelly's grandmother, Mrs. Odell, was also a member at this time. Her three daughters grew into womanhood in the church; they were Hattie's mother (Mrs. Nona Coffey), Mrs. Mary Dale, and Mrs. Mattie Pattishall [*Pattisal in the original manuscript*]. Mrs. Odell had one son, Fred.

"The family of Rev. J.A. Rector, including his wife Mary F. and his children Finley, Simeon, Theodosia, Pruella (Mrs. Sparks), Lillie (Mrs. Giles), Florence, and Rosalia placed letters in the Morganton church about 1880, a year after its founding. Julius joined the church later. Minnie Rector (Mrs. Wagner) brought a letter from Smyrna Baptist Church to Morganton church in 1894. When Mrs. Sparks married John Sparks she moved her letter to North Catawba, but came back to Morganton with her husband and family and reunited with the church about 1909." (Minnie Rector Wagner and Mrs. Sparks' daughter, Mary Dobson, have furnished this information concerning the families of J.A. Rector and John Sparks.)

Rev. H.D. Lequeux [*Leqnaux or Lequaux in original manuscript*] became pastor in July 1889 and served until July 1892. The Lequeux family lived in a rented house as a parsonage, a frame building on West Union Street near what is now the Catholic Church. Miss Irene Lequeux, the only daughter, is still living and resides in Taylorsville.

In one of the few very old minutes of the Church of this period is a picture of a baptismal scene in the Catawba River at the McDowell Bridge. Mr. Lequeux was pastor at the time. The baptismal rites were administered by Rev. G.M. Church [*G.H. Church in original manuscript*] who was conducting evangelistic services. There were twelve baptized, among whom were Minnie Huffman (Mrs. W.H. Reddish), still a member of our Church; Kita Walker (Mrs. I.A. McGalliard); Clara Berry (Mrs. Oscar Parish) [*Mrs. Osmer Parish in original manuscript*], a sister of our W.T. Berry (she being the one about to be immersed by Mr. Church in the picture.)

As far as it is known no one of the original members of our Church, at the time of its organization, is now living.

Five persons, however, who belonged to the membership of the Church which was burned are still living. These are Mrs. Minnie Huffman Reddish, Mrs. Belle Turner Lane, of Morganton; Mrs. Minnie Beach Bailey of Hickory; Miss Irene Lequeux of Taylorsville; and Mrs. John Sparks of Nebo.

Some of our most vivid recollections are the baptismal scenes which took place in the Catawba River up to 1895 with the building of the new Church and its baptistry. Sid Zimmerman, the architect and contractor for the new Church, was the first person to be immersed in its pool.

THE EARLY PASTORS OF THE CHURCH

Rev. Needham Bryan Cobb	1879 - 1886
Rev. G.W. Gardner	1887 - 1888
Rev. Robert Logan Patton	1888 - 1889
Rev. H.D. Lequeux	1889 - 1892

On January 1, 1893, R.L. Patton became pastor and served until April, 1896. These three years were eventful ones in the life of the Church. Many important happenings took place, some of which had far reaching results.

Patton, a country boy of seventeen summers, reared under the shadow of the Table Rock, clad in rough jean breeches and woven shirt, carrying all his worldly possessions in a pillow case, left home to "get an education and be something." Just how the idea of "getting an education" had come about is hard to explain. Perhaps the idea had been instilled in his alert mind by his sainted mother who, when he was eleven years old had held his hand saying in a last farewell, "Logan, be a useful man, meet me in Heaven." These unforgettable words had been an inspiration to him throughout his entire life.

Sallying forth before day one morning he started across the mountains of Tennessee and on into Illinois. He "footed it" over a thousand miles, slept out at night, worked with foreigners and negroes at any kind of work, taking his precious little Testament out from an inside pocket at night, and gaining from it courage to go on. With a small stake, he then started to school where the rudiments of an education were secured; then on to Exeter Academy of New Hampshire, and later on through Amherst College, Massachusetts, where he graduated ten years after his journey had begun.

There were hundreds of crises reached, but somehow, they were overcome and he managed by sleeping six hours a night and working and studying the remainder, to graduate with high honors. Sectional feeling was intense in those days so soon after the Civil War, but the men of Amherst respected this southern fellow who was not ashamed to study from borrowed books, who chopped wood in odd times at five cents an hour to buy oil and books. As nearly out of heart as Patton ever became was along toward the end of the struggle. Expenses mounting daily in this rich man's college, he felt it was impossible to go on, so he decided to quit college for a year and work. A letter came from the President of Amherst College. The other day we read again from a worn sheet of paper, the writing still faintly legible, words written 80 years ago in which the President said: "A young man who is willing to ring the college bells, to make beds, to build fires and shovel snow, to study in bed to save fuel, such a young man has never left Amherst College for lack of means."

Hurrying back home after his graduation, he established Table Rock Academy and a year later, married Margaret Spainhour who was then nineteen years of age.

Through a series of years, leaving one well-established academy to start another, refusing flattering offers and always burning with the desire to help other young men of western North Carolina to become educated - is it any wonder that God blessed this man's work? With this building of academies he was allowed the great privilege of touching and helping to mould the lives and characters of many great and good men and women who have blessed humanity with their dedicated lives. We are thinking now of such men as the long line of gifted Moores, headed by R.L. and Dr. Hight C. from Globe Academy; of Rufus Bradshaw from Amherst Academy; of such men as Bruce Payne, President for many years of Peabody College; A.T. Allen, State Supt. of Public Instruction; T.L. Blaylock, the life-

long missionary to China, as well as our own Lettie Spainhour Hamlett; all of these and many more who were prepared for college at the Patton School.

R.L. Patton came to Morganton from the Moravian Falls Academy to take up the pastorate as well as to establish the Patton Academy, or as it was later called, the Patton School. Samuel Huffman was already the bulwark behind the finances of the Church. He not only assisted in the establishment of the school as well as the erection of the school building itself where his three older children, Minnie, Frank, and Fred were prepared for college, but kept the entire Patton family in his home for two weeks until the dwelling house could be completed.

The home of Samuel Huffman has always been the home for entertaining preachers. We recall hearing Mrs. Reddish laughingly say that in those early days, "the best fringed, checked tablecloth was always kept freshly laundered for the visiting preachers." Samuel Huffman taught the class of young boys in the early Sunday School for a number of years; was a life-long deacon, the backbone of the financial status of the early Church; his means were consecrated to God and God blessed him and as long as he lived he was one of the strongest, truest members the Church has ever had. What a heritage to leave! What a mantle, indeed, to fall upon his children and grandchildren! Eight or ten years ago we stood with Minnie Reddish in her home, looking at the portrait of this man hanging upon the wall, and as we stood there we wept as we recalled, in the years that are gone, the powerful but unassuming and kindly force of this man.

Much might be said of the beloved M.P. Hildebran who was for 40 years superintendent of the Sunday School and a devoted member of the Church. He served as treasurer for many years and his account books, now in possession of the Church, show the meticulous care with which he kept every item. The cost of every ball of twine and every pound of nails is set down. Every load of water hauled for mixing mortar is recorded. Not only did he hold offices which might have been coveted, but he acted as janitor, gratis, and saw that the Church was always comfortable. In the old Church, and for years in the present one, his custom on Sunday morning was to go early to build a fire in the Church, return home for breakfast and to dress for church, then back to Sunday School. On one particular cold, icy Sunday morning, when it was dangerous to be on foot, he was known to have gone, on his hands and knees before dawn, to build the fire in the Church. (His home was near the site of the Dr. Alston residence on Valdese Avenue.) It is also known that he spent untold hours on his knees in supplication to God for his Church. No matter what prominent visiting minister was in the congregation, Pastor Patton never honored him by asking that he conduct the morning worship prayer, but always his custom was to ask Brother Hildebran to lead this prayer.

His portrait hangs in the assembly room of the Educational Building and his influence and faithfulness is yet felt in the Church.

Recollection vividly brings to mind Mr. Hildebran at the front of the little Sunday School, using the same small table which is still in possession of the Church. Even in the old Church, before it was burned, as a small child we can recall his gentle kindly manner as he came around to where she was seated, to shake hands with Grandmother Spainhour, in

her black silk splitbonnet, who always accompanied Winnie, Joe and the writer to Sunday School when she was able. Although she could neither read nor write, she had raised a large family of God-fearing children. When she came to the Spainhour home as a bride, she was the only Baptist in the Presbyterian Spainhour home where the three sisters of Mike Spainhour also lived. These Presbyterian sisters-in-law accompanied Lettie Estes Spainhour every Saturday and Sunday "meeting day" when they walked three miles over to old Smyrna Church. The result of the influence of this godly woman's life was that the Spainhours became Baptists and today, where a Spainhour is found in various parts of the country, there one finds a Baptist, usually.

We have often heard our mother speak of some of her most cherished recollections of childhood being those of sitting before the big fireplace, Mike Spainhour reading aloud from the Bible until bedtime and Lettie Spainhour at the other side, in her low split bottom chair, peeling apples or knitting and listening. God bless the memory of such pioneers in our Baptist church history!

Another picture we love to recall, as a little child, was that of Mr. Hildebran "making change" before Sunday School started. This was the procedure: the eldest child (if responsible) would bring up a 5¢ or 10¢ piece to get change from Mr. Hildebran, who sat by the little table. [This writer recalls] the childish feeling of wonder yet. How many *thousands* of pennies *were* there in that capacious pocket! For every would-be "changer," his fist always came up full of pennies and small change. Then came the passing out of the pennies, one to each child of the family to give in their various classes. The teacher's offering was usually 10¢, sometimes 5¢, or perhaps the fabulous sum of 25¢.

In connection with these Sunday School collections, it is recalled that near the close of Sunday School, if the offering had been as much as one dollar or more, Mr. Hildebran announced it. If it was less than a dollar, nothing was said about the collection. One of Mr. Hildebran's daughters, Annie Lee (Mrs. Carl Hudson), is the only member of the large family who remains in the Church - the other living children being located elsewhere.

Belle Turner (Mrs. Charles Lane) and Lizzie Turner (Mrs. John Anderson), the latter our Bessie Denton's (Mrs. Eugene Denton) mother, were the Church organists. One or the other, served all through the years, from the old frame Church with its tiny organ, through the Town Hall and Court House period, to the little reed organ of the new Church where Mrs. Lane then began to receive the sum of \$2.00 per month for her services as organist around 1890 - 1891, with Minnie Huffman and Winnie Patton each taking over at different periods. Later Willie Spainhour (Mrs. I.G. Greer) served as organist for a number of years.

THE CHURCH BURNS AND A NEW ONE IS BUILT

On the night of December 13, 1893, a fire of unknown origin burned the Church and left the congregation without a place to worship. The Methodists, the Episcopalian, and the Presbyterians offered to share their places of worship. The Presbyterians even offered to give the Baptists half the time in their church.

It was decided to rent the Town Hall, paying \$1.25 a month for the privilege. It was in this building that the homeless congregation worshiped until October when they moved to the Court House, continuing there until July 14, 1895, when the present brick Church on the corner of King and Meeting Streets was dedicated.

Though cramped for space, spiritual feeling ran high. A great revival meeting was held during the Court House period when a large number, over forty, joined the church and were baptized in Catawba River. Stirring prayer meetings and Sunday services were attended by an enthusiastic membership. The Sunday School grew by leaps and bounds. We recall, in 1894, at the "Christmas Tree" program, Prof. E. Goodwin presenting the prizes of Bibles to the enlists of new members to the Sunday School.

Concerning the building of the Church, between the lines of the records one can read of much real sacrifice. For example, in two instances it is recorded that M. D. Brittain sold tracts of land and gave the money and the records show various gifts of lumber, etc. Mrs. Odell, who sewed for a living, was for many years a consecrated and much-loved member. When she was old and ripe for heaven she and her son, Fred, gave a pig to help pay on the new Church. So many years have passed that about all we remember of Mrs. Odell was her bright, cheery laugh.

In this period, when they were homeless, God was very near and real to his people. Contributions received toward the cost of the building included many from friends of other denominations, and many from the staff members of both the School for the Deaf and the State Hospital. A systematic canvass seems to have been made at each of these institutions.

The entire church membership was working - as in the days of old, "they were with one accord in one place," praying and working. Is it any wonder that, in the midst of this high spirit of prayer and unity, as the wonderful structure reached its completion and on the eve of its dedication, the pastor, after hours on his knees, made a momentous decision. On Saturday afternoon he mortgaged his home for as much money as he could secure on its title. Next morning the church, packed to its capacity, was ready to begin the Dedicatory Service. Dr. Sims of Raleigh was to give the address of dedication, with Rufus Bradshaw of Moravian Falls presiding, and Rev. J.H. Cashwell of Hickory to lead the prayer. After having spent the last hour on his knees in the new pastor's study, Mr. Patton quietly asked for a few minutes just before the service started. Then he told the people what he had done himself the afternoon before. He then called on his congregation *not* for dollars, but for *hundreds* of dollars - contributions to pay off the debt on the sanctuary. It was a stirring scene which 60 years cannot efface from our memory. Men and women wept

openly. They gave as they had never given in their entire lives. In a very few minutes every penny of the balance of the several thousand dollars debt was pledged. We recall how quickly it was over. (Money was scarce, too, in those days.) And then what a song went up! It must have reached the very gates of Heaven - the whole congregation sang, led by the little choir and the matchless music coming from the wonderful small new reed organ played by Belle Turner Lane.

It has been asked by N.B. Cox of the Southern Baptist Convention if the pastor was to be repaid later by the Church for this amount of his mortgage, and if not to be repaid, had he already made a contribution before mortgaging his home. The answer is that up to this time he had led his congregation in sacrificial giving from his pastor's salary, which the records show was \$35.00 a month, and tuition of \$2.00 per month per student. As to the mortgage, if it had even been suggested that the Church ever repay it, he would have been very indignant.

Before we leave the building of the new Church and enter a new era, certain items may be of interest. A communion service consisting of silver plates and two goblets were bought for \$16.50. (The plates were also used for collections; before this time, hats were used.) The church pews, \$702.00; the reed organ, \$150.00; the church bell, \$143.90; the windows, \$305.00. By November 2, 1895, a total of \$6,512.70 had been paid out for the new building and its furnishings, which apparently represented the bulk of the cost of the new structure and its equipment. To this above amount, some hundreds of dollars were added later for certain items. The pulpit Bible which has now been used for 60 years, was given by a Presbyterian friend, Col. Samuel McDowell Tate. This Bible, the writer recalls, cost \$100.00.

In 1894 we note two items of interest. On January 4, the deacons' meeting notes: "Paid on church lot \$20.00 to J.A. Shuping" and "Electric light bill for church - \$2.50."

In the middle nineties, the names of many return to our memory who have either moved away or passed on. Among these, the name of Dave Mull stands out prominently, not only for his strong loyalty to the Church but for his great financial aid. Mr. and Mrs. Mull and their three daughters, Liarene, Sara and Rosalia, all belonged to our Church and the three daughters grew up into womanhood in our midst. The Smith girls, Eliza and Maggie, were members of the choir as well as of the Church. Mr. N.L. Beach, a railroad man and a strong devoted member, with his wife were for many years in our midst. All of the family are dead except two daughters, Mrs. Mattie Williams and Mrs. Minnie Bailey, who were also members of the early Church.

In 1894 there came from Raleigh a man who was to become a faithful and valuable member of the Church, Prof. E. McK. Goodwin. Prof. Goodwin came to Morganton as the Superintendent of the State Deaf School which position he held for many years. Prof. Goodwin served as Chairman of the Board of Deacons from about 1900 until 1937 when ill health forced him to resign.

A PARTIAL LIST OF CHURCH MEMBERS IN 1895

John Abernathy	J.L. Duckworth	Mrs. H.C. Pattishall
R.S. Amos	Emma Duckworth	John Phillips
J.H. Amos	E. McK. Goodwin	R.L. Patton
Mrs. M.E. Battle	Mrs. Eliza Grayson	Mrs. R.L. Patton
W.B. Burgess	W. Griffin	Winnie Patton
Mrs. Bush	Charlie P. Hill	P.W. Patton
N.E. Braswell	Samuel Huffman	John G. Parker
Mrs. Eliza Burgess	Mrs. S. Huffman	E.A. Poe
A.R. Buffaloe	F.O. Huffman	A.B. Queen
Clara Berry	Minnie Huffman	Mrs. A.B. Queen
John Brown	S.O. Huffman	Jones Queen
Robert L. Bailey	W.P. Hemphill	Henry Queen
N.L. Beach	Joe L. Hemphill	Pete Queen
Mrs. N.L. Beach	Charlie D. Hemphill	Roland Riddle
Mattie Beach	W. Ebb Hemphill	Rev. J.A. Rector
Minnie Beach	W.W. Holloway	Mrs. J.A. Rector
Lizzie Benfield	M.P. Hildebran	Finley Rector
C.F. Brown	Mrs. M.P. Hildebran	Simeon Rector
H.R. Bridges	Miss. Lucy Happoldt	Theodosia Rector
Joe Benfield	W.H. Hardin	Pruella Rector
M.D. Brittain	W.J. Mathews	Lillie Rector
L.A. Brittain	Mrs. Lizzie Moore	Florence Rector
Mrs. Mattie Brittain	J.M. Mull	Rosalia Rector
T.B. Brittain	Liarene Mull	J.F. Spainhour
R.B. Brittain	D.B. Mull	Mrs. J.F. Spainhour
D.A. Betts	S.C. Mull	P.F. Simmons
M.C. Crouch	J.Waits Mull	A.W. Smith
Pink Coleman	B.A. Mull	Eliza Smith
H.W. Clark	J.Z. Mull	Maggie Smith
F.F. Causey	J.V. Mull	Mark G. Singleton
Joella Clark	M.J. Mull	Mrs. Gray Turner
Mrs. Doris Curtis	J.B. Mull	Fred G. Turner
Mrs. T.A. Clark	Eli Newton	Belle Turner
J.W. Coffey	Mrs. E. Newton	Lizzie Turner
Robert M. Curtis	Etta Newton	Meadle Turner
Tom A. Carswell	Mrs. H.L. Odell	N.E. Turner
H. Clark	Nora Odell	Kita Walker
James Clark	Fred Odell	Richard Williams
Miss C.C. Clark	Mark Phelps	Dr. Geo. I. White
Mrs. A.P. Chandler	Eliza Pearson	Mrs. G.I. White
Altha Clark	Ray Powell	Mrs. A.L. Winters
Jim Coleman	S.M. Powell	Will Wilson
W.W. Carroll	Mamie Powell	D.K. Winters
J. J. Daves	R.O. Phillips	Mrs. S. E. Walton
L. Dora Davis	H.C. Pattishall	J.H. Walker
		Mrs. J.H. Walker

Mrs. Queen was a staunch member along during this period. Never missing a service, not even prayer meeting, no matter what the weather, walking from their little home far below the depot with all her five boys. She was always on hand, a woman with rare good humor and common sense as well as godliness. At thought of her, Gordon Queen and other members of the family should thank God for giving them such a mother! Mr. Queen was a

quiet, unassuming man, but until death claimed its occupant, his corner seat in the second row, center of the church, was never empty.

Dr. and Mrs. J.B. Riddle moved from Bridgewater, during this period, to Morganton and affiliated themselves with our Church, both serving with useful lives until their deaths. Their three children were raised in our midst and at the present, the younger daughter lives in Atlanta, the older in Raleigh, Mrs. R. Chamblee. The son, Bennett, Jr., died some years ago.

Joseph F. Spainhour founded Oak Hill Academy in Grayson County, Virginia, where he met Sue Parks who later became his wife at the age of 17. J.F. Spainhour, in 1895, then Solicitor of the 10th district, moved from Boone, mainly to get the advantages of school here for his children, and here Lettie, Fred Parks and Willie were prepared for college. In the early years Mrs. Spainhour taught a class in the Sunday School, serving as President at one period of the Womans' Missionary Society, working faithfully in various phases of church work as long as her health permitted and then attending, though she was not able to join in. The fragrance of her memory still lingers. Mr. Spainhour, on moving to Morganton, at once entered into the life of the Church with his wonderful power and vigor. A staunch member until his death at almost 90 years of age, he left a long record of work. Especially do we remember him as a teacher for many years of the Bible class and a life-long deacon. In his twilight years he still attended the Church he loved although unable to hear the preaching or scarcely even the singing. The prayers of these two are blessing the First Baptist Church even today in the gracious and consecrated service of their daughter, Annie Spainhour Walker (Mrs. Ernest Walker).

A NEW ERA: THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH, PASTORS, AND LEADERS

Rev. E.F. Jones served the Church from 1896 to 1898 as pastor. Mr. Jones had previously led a great revival meeting in our midst and, lovingly remembered, was called back as pastor.

From 1898 to 1900 Dr. Samuel Judson Porter was pastor of the congregation, at which time he accepted a call to a church in Washington, D.C. During Dr. Porter's pastorate, in 1898, the church membership was 140. While Dr. Porter was pastor, he insisted at every service, in his very pleasant genial manner, that *every one stand up and sing*. Mr. Spainhour and Mr. Patton would say sometimes, "If he doesn't hush saying that, we *will* do it some day." (As neither man was ever known to sing a single note, it did seem a dire threat, which to our certain knowledge was never carried out.)

We find Rev. William H. Reddish pastor of the Church in 1903. Mr. Reddish boarded at Mr. Samuel Huffman's and later married Mr. Huffman's only daughter, Minnie. After their marriage they resided in a rented house on S. Sterling Street as the Church had no parsonage at the time. Mrs. Reddish played the reed organ for all the services during his pastorate. After accepting a pastorate at the Gastonia church, he later was called to Wadesboro church and then to Millen, Ga., where he died suddenly from a heart attack on September 7, 1919. After some months of work with the Baptist Board in Raleigh and followed by a serious illness, Mrs. Reddish returned to Morganton where she has spent almost 30 years now, giving practically her entire time in serving her Church. Now, as she waits, an invalid, in these twilight years we wonder if perhaps *any* member of First Church has ever served in so many capacities or more capably than has Minnie Reddish.

Edward M. Hairfield came to Morganton in 1907, a young man just graduated from Wake Forest Law School the year before. Fortunate he was to be taken into the law office of the brilliant attorney, J.F. Spainhour - who was then in his prime. Then Mr. Hairfield practiced alone for a period, building up a name of his own. After being elected Superintendent of the city schools in 1910 and serving in that capacity for five years, he returned to his law practice, first associated with A.C. Avery, Jr. and in 1933 with his son, Edward Hairfield, Jr. He was elected Mayor of Morganton in 1929, State Senator in 1933. He served his Church well as a deacon, elected in 1908 - a life deacon until death, as church clerk from about 1909 until Eugene Denton took over about 1932, and as a teacher of the Baraca Class in Sunday School for 25 years.

Mr. and Mrs. James Sparks came to Morganton in the very late fall of 1907. They joined our church by letter, early in 1908. Gladys, with her mother, recalls how the ringing of the church bell was the signal for every member of the family to start to the Church - cold winter nights, on foot, but always there. Mrs. Sparks recalls how Mrs. Larkin and Mrs. J.E. Erwin visited her, asking her to call on certain women in order that they might be prevailed upon to join the W.M.U. She well remembers visiting, in this capacity, Mrs. Charles Walker and Mrs. John Walker.

Mr. Tom Sparks came to Morganton to our Church some five years later. His wife, Mrs. Daisy Sparks, and her sister, Mrs. Cora (Mrs. P.W.) Patton, both gave long useful years of

service to the church. Although both women are now in other homes they are lovingly remembered. (Since writing above, Mrs. Sparks has returned to Morganton.)

On November 27, 1908, at the deacons' meeting, it was decided to ask the Church to elect "Brothers Hairfield and S. Huffman as deacons." These two men were not actually ordained until two years later. The records do not indicate the exact date of Mr. Hairfield's ordination, but state that on Sunday, October 23, 1910, S. Huffman and W.E. Walton (the father of Mrs. Clifford Walker) were ordained.

Rev. William H. Reddish was followed by Rev. M.L. Kesler as pastor. During his tenure, the decision to take an offering for the orphanage each month was made at a deacons' meeting on January 24, 1905. It was interesting to note last fall, 1955, in the week after Thanksgiving issue of the *News Herald* an item of 50 years ago - Thanksgiving 1905 - as follows: "Thanksgiving services were held in all the local churches. The Baptist church gave \$100 to their orphanage in Thomasville." This \$100 was the goal for the orphanage, the writer recalls, for a number of years. It might be added that the offering never fell below that mark.

At the January 17, 1905, deacons' meeting, "The pastor, Bro. M.L. Kesler, was instructed to have two electric lights put in front of the doors of the church." At another meeting of the deacons on March 1, 1904, "The question of closing the trade for the parsonage was brought up, money to be raised at once to reduce the price, or debt, from \$1,850 to \$1,500. The \$1,500 to be paid by borrowing money either from the bank or an individual and giving a mortgage on said property. Messrs. J.F. Spainhour and P.W. Patton were appointed as a committee to close the trade, Mr. Spainhour to look after the drawing up of the papers and Mr. Patton to see about borrowing the money from an individual. /s/ E.McK. Goodwin, Chm. and E.F. Mumford, Clerk." The frame building referred to above was bought and used for a parsonage, later as the Educational Building before the present one was built.

Dr. William Francis Powell was pastor of the Church from February through December, 1906. In a December, 1955, issue of the local paper appeared an item of interest, copied from an old issue of 1905, 50 years ago. It reads as follows: "The members of the Baptist Church met in Executive session last Sunday for the purpose of calling a pastor to succeed Rev. M.L. Kesler who resigned several months ago to go to Thomasville as Supt. of the orphanage there. Rev. R.L. Patton, who has been filling the pulpit since then whenever it was possible for him to do so, has given it up and will devote his full time to his country churches and the Patton school here in Morganton. The result of the meeting was to call Rev. C.L. Greaves of E.N.C. to become pastor of the church. It is not known whether he will accept." Mr. Greaves did not accept the offer and we find in a later issue of early February, 1906, the following item (again copied 50 years later): "The Baptist church has called, for their pastor, Rev. William Francis Powell of Virginia. Mr. Powell comes highly recommended." During Dr. Powell's pastorate the following items from the records of Deacons' meetings are of interest: "The pastor brought before the deacons the question of having a revival. It was decided to get Rev. Geo. W. Truett of Dallas, Texas, to conduct a meeting at a time to suit him. Our pastor was requested to write him to secure his services. April 9, 1906. /s/ E. McK. Goodwin, chairman and E.F. Mumford, church clerk." The

question of organizing a Sunbeam Society was brought up by the pastor and a motion was made by E.F. Mumford which was passed." Miss Mabel Haynes was given the opportunity of organizing the society and was to have the support and encouragement of the Church. Brother Powell stated that he had received a unanimous call from Roanoke, Virginia, First Church and stated that he would have to hand in his resignation to take effect the third Sunday of December."

Before leaving Morganton for Roanoke where Dr. Powell was pastor the next seven years, he was married to Winnie Patton, daughter of Rev. R. L. Patton. He then accepted a call to Chattanooga where he was pastor for several years and from Chattanooga back to North Carolina to fill the pulpit of the First Church of Asheville. After four years in Asheville, he accepted a call to the First Church of Nashville, Tenn. On June 1, 1955, Dr. Powell retired from active service as pastor of this Church where he had served as its minister for thirty-four years. Although retired, Dr. Powell is by no means inactive. A great deal of his time is taken up in conducting evangelistic meetings in various parts of the South; between times, in his still busy life, he is arranging and collecting the material for a book he has never before found time to write.

In 1907 Rev. J.D. Larkin became our pastor. When he left our Church for another field, the church called Rev. James Long, who, after a short pastorate was followed by Rev. Elbert Johnson. Rev. J.R. Williams, the next pastor, was called to still another field early in 1917.⁴ These four devout men served our church, for only the short period of ten years.

THE PASTORS WHO HAVE SERVED THE CHURCH SINCE THE ERECTION OF THE PRESENT BUILDING⁵

1893 - 1896	Rev. R. L. Patton
1896 - 1898	Rev. E. Frank Jones
1898 - 1900	Dr. Samuel Judson Porter
1901 - 1904	Rev. William H. Reddish
1904 - 1905	Rev. M. L. Kesler
1906 - 1907	Dr. Wm. Francis Powell
1907 - 1909	Rev. J.D. Larkin [<i>Larkins in original</i>]
1909 - 1911	Rev. James Long
1911 - 1914	Rev. Elbert N. Johnson
1914 - 1917	Rev. Joseph R. Williams
1917 - 1925	Rev. Fred A. Bower
1925 - 1934	Rev. Wm. Rufus Bradshaw
1934 - 1938	Rev. Robert L. Councilman
1939 - [1956]	Rev. John Dudley McCready

On May 13, 1917, Rev. Fred A. Bower began his work as pastor in Morganton. When Mr. Bower accepted the call to our Church he was pastor in Albany, N.Y. His coming opened up a new era in the work of the Church. The church building was undergoing repairs at

the time, the Annex was being built and the pipe organ was soon to be installed. This latter was largely a donation (his very last one) by Andrew Carnegie. Mr. Bower preached in the Graded School building for quite a while then. He and Mrs. Bower lived in the old frame parsonage which was in somewhat bad shape at the time. He personally bought that first winter and had installed a hot air furnace. It was a life saver in the old parsonage because the winter of 1917 - 1918 was the coldest in history. When the pipe organ was installed, Mrs. E.M. Hairfield became the first church organist. The church choir was more fully organized. No one who attended the church during that period will ever forget the consecrated and gifted singing of Mr. and Mrs. Bower. It was a privilege we had never known before. Indeed, as we look back over the years, the memory of this wonderful service was comparable in its influence for good only to the forceful preaching of this young man who, with his wife, were reared in Nova Scotia.

The pastor's salary when Mr. Bower came to Morganton was \$1,200.00 and parsonage; later his salary was raised to \$1,800.00, then to \$2,400.00, and before he left he was receiving \$3,000.00.

The following is copied from a letter of Mr. Bower's: "About 1921 agitation was begun for a new parsonage. At a meeting, Mr. Samuel Huffman moved that we take steps to build one. In response to this, the old building was moved back, at a cost of \$1,200 and we lived on in it until November, 1922. I paid \$35.00 monthly into the church treasury in addition to our tithes the rest of the years we lived in Morganton. This money was applied on the B. & L. fund for the new parsonage. I drew up the plans; Zimmerman of Asheville made the drawings or blueprints. Mr. E. McK. Goodwin bought all materials and Uncle Bill Setzer, Jim Sparks and a Mr. Harris did the carpenter work. Joe Deal and Charlie Parks laid the foundation for the brick work and I paid Jim Caldwell (colored) 15¢ an hour to wheel brick and mortar for them. It cost less than \$11,000 though Joe Elliott of Hickory wanted the contract for \$12,000. When completed, it was one of the finest parsonages in N.C.

"Three outstanding men were among the deacons in that time. They were Samuel Huffman, E. McK. Goodwin and J.F. Spainhour. I have never had three men of their caliber since. We preached Christ and Him crucified. We practiced tithing and missionary giving. The Saviour smiled upon us. We had conversions often, had good revivals under such men as S.H. Templeman, S.J. Porter and others. When I left in 1925 I had been pastor for 8 years. Ernest Walker was S.S. Supt. with 525 in attendance. I was Educational Director, Choir director, Minister of Music, Pastor and part-time janitor.

"Outstanding men of this era, men whose stars were waning at the time, were Pink Hildebrand and your own illustrious father. He, (R.L. Patton) did more for missions and education in that era than all the rest of us put together. I hallow his memory."

Interim pastorate: "We had returned to Morganton and I took up the pastor's work in August, 1944, when Mr. McCready was in the service. Pastoral supplies were hard to come by. We lived in the parsonage until Jan. 1, 1946 when the pastor returned. Outstanding was the evangelistic revival in the spring of 1945, upward of 60 joined the church. After his return, on Sept. 29, 1946, the church consented for Bro. McCready to go on a

stretch for the Home Mission Board and again I took over, concluding at his return Dec. 15, 1946, a three months' period."

In the absence of our present pastor, Rev. John D. McCready, while he served as chaplain in World War II, we were indeed fortunate in having Mr. Bower take over his duties as pastor for the entire 21 months he was gone. We are blessed with the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Bower who returned some years ago to make their home in our midst and later to spend, we hope, their evening years here. Not only is our Church, but the entire community, made richer thereby.

In 1925 Rev. Wm. Rufus Bradshaw became pastor of our Church. During Mr. Bradshaw's pastorate, the Educational building came into being as such. He and Mrs. Bradshaw lived in the present brick parsonage. Probably, among all the godly men who have been our pastors, none was so widely mourned at his death or whose memory is more beloved than that of Rev. Rufus Bradshaw. His ministry to the sick was an outstanding record. Not only did he minister to the sick and those in trouble in our Church, but to those of *all* denominations and to people in all walks of life. When death came, or sickness, Mr. Bradshaw was always there! His regular set time for visiting his "old people" was *always* Monday mornings. His reply to a query sometimes as to whether he wasn't especially tired after a fully busy Sunday, was, "It gives me a lift for the week to visit with these older people who used to be with us in church. It does me more good than them."

Rev. R. L. Councilman came to the Morganton church as the Pastor's assistant. The Church was growing and expanding so it was felt the pastor needed help in his heavy duties. Mr. Councilman served in this capacity for the last four years of Mr. Bradshaw's pastorate when, on the resignation of Mr. Bradshaw, Mr. Councilman was elected as pastor of the church. Mr. Councilman was pastor for four years, making eight years in all that he served our Church. He is at present located in Burlington.

THE MUSIC AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mrs. Belle Lane was the first organist of our Church, beginning in the early church with its tiny organ and later in the present church with its reed organ. She was paid \$2 per month after around 1891. Her sister, Mrs. John Anderson, mother of Mrs. Eugene Denton, assisted her for a number of the early years. Later, Winnie Patton acted as church organist before her marriage to Rev. W.F. Powell. Mrs. Minnie Reddish served as organist practically the entire time Rev. W. H. Reddish was pastor of our Church. Later Mrs. I.G. Greer, the former Willie Spainhour, served as church organist. We quote from a recent letter of Mrs. Greer who now, with Dr. Greer, resides in Chapel Hill, "As I look back over the years I can hardly recall *when* I began playing the organ at our church. I suppose it was during my vacation at home while at Woman's College about 1905 - 06. Then I was organist regularly while I taught in High School and at the Deaf School around 1907 - five years, and later, 1914 - 16, I was organist at the time I was married." When she left Morganton, the choir presented her with a beautiful cut glass vase in appreciation of her services.

Mrs. Hairfield was the first organist after the pipe organ was installed. With the exception of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker who served in this capacity for possibly 12 to 15 years, Mrs. Hairfield's work covered the rest of the period from 1917 to 1945. Mrs. Gilbert Walker is now church organist. She took over this full time work in 1951. We pause here to give tribute to the life work of Elizabeth, Mrs. Clifford Walker - a life of consecrated service to the Church, not only in the field of music but in various phases of the church activities.

The first paid church worker was Mary Louise Cokley who was in charge of Religious Education and Music, 1938 - 1939. Ila Hensley of High Point served next as Choir and Religious Education Director. Elizabeth Turner, in charge of music only, was followed by Mary Elizabeth Roberts, and later Mrs. John L. Wiltshire who is with us today. Miss Helen Harris, who has served the Church for a number of years as Educational Director, was on June 1, 1955, appointed by the Church to fill the important office of church secretary, later appointed to the two-fold position of Educational Director and Director of Recreation. On June 1, 1955, Harry E. Crosby of Chester, S.C., was chosen as Educational and Recreational Director.

The church choirs are five in number and have about 130 members. These are: the Church Choir; the Chapel or Young People's Choir; Ambassador Choir for boys of 9 - 12 years of age; the Carol Choir for girls of 9 - 12 years; and the Cherub Choir which consists of boys and girls of ages 6 to 8 years.

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

The Sunday School

The present Sunday School has a membership of 867. W.A. Hord, Sr. is Superintendent and John H. Cantrell, Sr. is Associate Superintendent. The Huffman Class has been mentioned in connection with its founder and teacher of many years, R.O. Huffman. Ernest Walker has been identified with this class also during the years as assistant teacher and now for several years as teacher, with Stanley Moore acting as assistant.

The Baraca Class of men is also one of importance, whose teacher is Eugene Denton. R.L. Patton was teacher of this class for many years. As has been mentioned before, Mr. Hairfield taught this class earlier for 25 years.⁶

Ernest Walker was a former Superintendent of the Sunday School, as was Eugene Denton.

The Flora Whitley class is another class of the years. Mrs. Ralph Whitley began teaching this group of young women twenty years ago. The organization had grown to such size that last year (1954) it was decided to divide the class. Mrs. Ernest Walker took the division called the Dorcas Class and Mrs. Whitley retained the other part called the Flora Whitley class.

Mrs. Ernest Walker was for many years Superintendent of the Intermediate Department in the Sunday School. She is now filling the important office of Treasurer of Benevolence of the Church.

Mrs. J.F. Wortman acted as an official and often in Junior department taught a Sunday School class for nearly forty years. She has been an important leader in the W.M.U. and in other activities of the Church and was a member of the Church Choir for many years.

Sunday School Class for the Deaf

This project was especially due to the solicitude of Mrs. Frank Huffman. Others who played an important part in this enterprise were Dr. Odie Underhill of the Deaf and Miss Carrie Haynes. The pastor suggested the Greek word *Ephphatha*, meaning "Be opened" - the word Christ used when He opened the ears of the deaf man - for the class name, and it was accepted.

The Baptist Training Union

The Baptist Training Union of First Church had its beginning in 1926. We had a B.Y.P.U. prior to 1917. Cecil Dobson being its first Director, as well as Associational Director. He held this important post for eight years. James Black is the Director now of this church organization. The enrollment is 102.

The Men's Brotherhood

The Men's Brotherhood of our Church was organized on September 10, 1955, and has as its President, Carl L. Williams; Vice Presidents, E.Y. Fox, G.M. Hill and Fred Hardin; Secretary-Treasurer, Bill Thompson; Song Leader, Fred Penland. This organization has a membership of 29 men.

The Womans' Missionary Society

Mr. Kesler, being pastor, had at a November, 1905, Deacons' meeting asked the deacons "by request of the Ladies of the Church if they were willing and would encourage the Womans' Missionary Society." After some discussion, J.H. Walker, father of Tiena and Elsie Walker, made a motion that the deacons "recommend to the church that encouragement be given to the ladies in organizing a Womans' Missionary Society." The motion was carried, and so came into being this organization which had from its birth the devotion, the sacrificial tithes, the prayers and the labor of the women of our Church. Many have gone on to their rewards; many older women are still laboring today and also, with them, our host of fine capable young women. God has wonderfully blessed our Church in giving us consecrated women, not only down through the years, but *today* - this wealth of young women is the very heart of our Church. Only in Eternity shall we know the measure - the results of their labor.

Mrs. Kesler, the wife of the pastor, seems to have been the first president of the organization. Much of the success from the very beginning of the establishment and early growth of the Society was due to her efforts.

In those early years we find such outstanding leaders as Mrs. J.E. Erwin who was, for a number of years, not only President but also Associational Superintendent. Mrs. Erwin will always be loved in our Church for her devotion and work in the W.M.U. as well as teacher of the Womans' Class in Sunday School for many years. Mrs. Erwin recalls that on the very next day after she arrived in Morganton, July 17, 1908, Elizabeth Briggs, later Mrs. Pittman, who was making talks in W.N.C., met with the Society, eight members being present. Mrs. Erwin herself made the ninth member. The meeting was held up in the corner of the Church, near the pulpit where the annex was later built. Miss Briggs was entertained at the home of Mrs. Sam Huffman. Those present included Mrs. S. Huffman, Mrs. J.F. Spainhour, Mrs. Erwin, Mrs. Larkin (Mr. Larkin was pastor at the time), Mrs. J.H. Walker, Mrs. W.E. Walton, Mrs. J. Sparks, and perhaps Mrs. J.B. Riddle.

Mrs. Erwin recalls that she and Mrs. Spainhour attended the Associational meeting at Enon in 1920 where they talked to the women about organizing other societies.

In order to save coal in the heating of the Church during some of the winters, the Society had its meetings in Mrs. Erwin's home. She lived at Rose Villa, a beautiful home later remodeled into the Morganton Public Library. Along during this period, Mrs. Erwin recalls Mrs. Mullis, a faithful member as long as she lived, attending and bringing Hattie (now Mrs. Al Dickens) who was two or three years old at the time.

Mrs. Jim Sparks was an early member. Mrs. Erwin also recalls visiting Mrs. Webber with Mrs. Sparks in 1911. We find Mrs. Erwin's name as Associational Superintendent of the W.M.U. and again later. Although she cannot worship with us at present, the remembrance of Mrs. Erwin's godly life lingers with the First Baptist Church.

Also in the early years we find such names as Mrs. J.F. Spainhour taking an active lead as president in the home church and also secretary in the Associational W.M.U. in 1914 - Mrs. Walton was strongly identified with the early organization as has been her daughter Elizabeth (Mrs. Clifford Walker), Mrs. R.B. Moore, Mrs. J.B. Riddle, Mrs. Brent Rhyne, Mrs. J.H. Mullis, and many others not mentioned above.

Later in 1921, such women as Mrs. F.J. Wortman and Mrs. Moran Harbison held important offices in the Associational work. Mrs. Reddish became Superintendent of this work in 1924 for seven years. Mrs. Ernest Walker was also Associational leader as early as 1919. Mrs. H.F. Greer has held, efficiently and untiringly, for many years one of the most important offices in our church society. These good women, and many more have worked in the home church W.M.U. throughout these years, many, as in the case of Mrs. Ernest Walker, for over 35 years.

Is it any wonder then that God has blessed the work of these godly women! Last year the offering of the W.M.U. to State Missions was \$195.00; Annie Armstrong offering for Home Missions was \$242.60; the Lottie Moon offering for Foreign Missions was \$1,410.16, besides many more offerings to various causes.

Among the names of efficient leaders for the year 1955 - 56 are President, Mrs. W.A. Hord, Sr.; Vice-presidents, Mrs. Russell Berry and Mrs. W.R. Loftis; Secretary, Mrs. J.C. Liebhart; Treasurer, Mrs. H.F. Greer; and Pianist, Mrs. Luke Woodbury. Among the many other outstanding leaders are Mrs. J.D. McCready, Mrs. Olen Wall, Mrs. Clifford Poteat, Mrs. Worth Berry, Mrs. Al Dickens, Mrs. Ralph Green, Mrs. H.C. Tune, Mrs. Stanley Moore, Mrs. Y.E. Spake; Mrs. M.O. Braswell, Young People's Director; Mrs. A.A. Cline, Sunbeam Leader; Pat. D. Sykes and M.O. Braswell, R.A. Leaders; Mrs. A.W. Bracey, Mrs. Robey Green and Mrs. W.A. Hord, Jr., G.A. Leaders; Miss Marie Bach, Y.W.A. Leader.

The enrollment of the Womans' Missionary Society for 1955 - 56 is about 172 members, which includes ten circles; 64 of these members are tithers.

THE BOARD OF DEACONS

The deacons of the Church are Carl G. Brittain, C.C. Harrell, Sr., Ben E. Hoffmeyer, W.A. Hord, Sr., W. Stanley Moore, James Black, Dr. J.B. Helms, Dr. Ralph Hogshead, Jr., W.R. Mullis and Clifford Poteat. New members as of January 1, 1956 are John H. Cantrell, W.W. Hitt, Dr. A.M. Lang, Carl Williams and Fred Hardin.

Life Deacons on the Board are eight in number and their names are as follows: W.T. Berry, G.T. Cornwell, E.C. Denton, W. Carl Hudson, R.O. Huffman, Ivey McGimsey, F.A. Queener and F.J. Wortman. C.C. Harrell, Sr. is Chairman of the Board of Deacons. R.O. Huffman, who for many years had served efficiently and wisely as Chairman of the Board of Deacons, asked, at his 65th birthday in May of 1955 that he be retired from this responsible position. The Board of Deacons reluctantly gave their consent. Mr. Huffman was also, for many years, the teacher of one of the most important classes in our Sunday School - The Huffman Class - named in his honor.

In 1939 there were 12 life deacons on the Board. Six of these were taken by death and two more added to the remaining six, making eight the present number. Six rotating deacons were also serving. This number was later increased to nine, then to 12, and finally to 15.

Life Deacons

R.O. Huffman, Chairman - 1939	Ivey McGimsey
Eugene C. Denton, Secretary	Dr. J.B. Riddle
W.T. Berry	F.A. Queener
T. Cornwell	J.F. Spainhour
E.M. Hairfield	Charles D. Walker
W. Carl Hudson	Herman Wall
A.E. Jones	F.J. Wortman

Mr. Huffman resigned the chairmanship to take effect on his 65th birthday, May 15, 1955. Thereupon C.C. Harrell was elected Chairman.

W.T. Berry is Chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee. So outstandingly faithful has Mr. Berry's work been that the pastor used to tell him, during the remodeling of the Church, when he worked so constantly on every detail, the Church should put him up a little room in the building as in the temple of old where he could eat and sleep conveniently.

Eugene Denton, who is Secretary of the Board of Deacons, has probably held more church offices than any other member of our Church. For many years he has occupied the position of Church Clerk. He was Sunday School Superintendent also for many years and is today teacher of the Baraca Class - an important class of men. Wherever and whenever

a man who is devoted to his church is needed - Eugene Denton is one of the few who are usually called.

Jerome Wortman, another Life Deacon who was for many years Superintendent of the Junior Department in Sunday School and also Director of the B.Y.P.U (later called B.T.U) for a number of years, has given a lifetime of service to the Church. Probably Mr. Wortman's most valuable service was that of acting as Treasurer of the Building Fund. Last year, 1955, he asked to be retired from this Board, after working faithfully for years. At this time the Fund merged with the New Building Fund.

The Rotating Deacons

Russell Berry	W.L. Hall (or Wall?)	R.L. Patton '44-'46
R.L. Bost	C.C. Harrell	Max Poteet
Tux Bowers	Dr. J.B. Helms	Dr. John Reese
Carl Brittain	G. Maurice Hill	Dr. O.Z. Rollins
Rudolph Carswell	W. A. Hord	Y.E. Spake
Tom Cornwell (Life)	Ben Hoffmeyer	George Stout
T.L. Cordell	Dr. A.M. Lang	W.C. Tune
C.E. Cowan	C.C. Long	Charles Ernest Walker
Al J. Dickens	W. A. Lyday	Gilbert Walker
Marcus Erwin	Ivey McGimsey (Life)	Herman Walker
McDowell Estes	Burand McGinnis	Glen W. Wall
Dr. Ralph Falls	Stanley Moore	Sam Westbrook
Sam Freeman	W.R. Mullis	Carl Williams
		B.E. White

OUR MISSIONARIES

Lettie Spainhour Hamlett, who as a very young girl received the call to be a missionary, prepared herself for this work and went out to China as a young woman 25 years of age. On their first furloughs home, she was married to P.W. Hamlett. To this union were born two children, Lettie Logan and Peter W., Jr. Mr. Hamlett, after a long faithful service on the foreign field, died several years ago in broken health and is buried in the Morganton cemetery. Mrs. Hamlett was a missionary in China for 41 years. (At the present time, she is residing with her brother and his daughters in Roxboro.)

Mabel Haynes was the third daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Haynes who came to Morganton as teachers, together with the oldest daughter Alice, at the Deaf School. The entire family belonged to our church for a number of years. Carrie, the second daughter, spent all her teaching years in Morganton at the Deaf School until her retirement several years ago. Mabel was another young woman who grew up in our Church and who became a missionary to Cuba for some years.

Rebecca Eddinger, a missionary to Chile was supported by our Church for some years. She is now married to a Chilean congressman and still resides in Chile. Her husband is a Christian.

Marie Conner, the missionary who has been under the watchcare of our Church for a number of years, was first situated at Yangdhow, then for a while at Shanghai. Now she is at Formosa and her address is 10 Way Meu St., Tainam, Taiwan. (Taiwan is another modern name for Formosa.) We pay \$1,000 on her support and another church pays the other \$1,000.

Wade Bryant Hicks is under appointment by our Mission Board now to go to the Philippines. Our Church has assumed one-half the support of this missionary.

THE CHURCH OF TODAY

A wing at the left of the sanctuary was added in 1917 and later, in 1930, an educational building was erected at a cost of \$42,000 under the capable leadership of Frank O. Huffman, F. Jerome Wortman and Robert O. Huffman. Seven years ago [in 1949], the Church was repaired, beautified, and air conditioned at a cost of \$33,000. Ivey McGimsey and W.T. Berry of the Building Committee, were the "general overseers" of this work. A cottage at Ridgecrest was acquired about the same time and was later enlarged. A Boy Scout hut was built at the Catawba River bridge. Two business firms have placed us in their debt. The Estes Co. of Morganton provided the elaborate materials for the air-conditioning at cost. The Drexel Furniture Co. put at our disposal the facilities of their organization so that the extensive work necessary in the remaking of the pews was possible. They also assisted in the purchase of furnishings for the building.

In 1953 our Church purchased two valuable pieces of property on West Union Street: the old John Pearson home and the house next door erected by the late Andrew Kistler. The two properties comprise about seven acres and afford a commanding site of exceptional beauty. On this location, within a few years, will be built a sanctuary and a complete educational plant which will meet our needs for many years to come. A committee headed by F.J. Wortman and Dr. J.B. Helms, with Sam W. Freeman as Secretary-Treasurer, has been appointed to have general charge of all that pertains to this important project. The "500 Dollar Club," which raised more than \$10,000 during 1954 and 1955 to apply against the debt, is now in process of raising additional funds. On January 13, 1956, the Club had a total of \$3,500 in the bank to be applied toward retirement of the debt. Ben McFadden was the originator of this Club.

We copy the following from a recent Church bulletin: "A year ago today the tithes and offerings were \$720.82; on January 8, 1956, \$981.48 and today on January 15, 1956, \$817.21."

MEMORIALS

Three memorials have been given to the Church by relatives of the loved ones for

Annette Beck

Mrs. Lula Thompson Berry

Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Mullis

On December 31, 1955, Sam W. Freeman, Secretary-Treasurer, issued a financial statement regarding The New Church Building Fund: From March 1, 1953 to December 31, 1955 the total income from special contributions, annual budget, interest on B. & L. savings, and miscellaneous - \$40,288.52. Expenditures including note, interest, service charge, repairs, B. & L., and miscellaneous expenses - \$37,521.89. On November 1, 1955, "The Regular Building Fund" and "The New Church Building Fund" were combined under the latter name with one treasurer. The cost of both pieces of property on West Union Street was \$91,500.00. Before the two building funds were combined, a sum of \$13,123.11 has been applied to the debt from the Regular Building Fund, reducing the debt to \$42,000.00 on December 31, 1955.

Under the guidance of our pastor, John Dudley McCready, who came to us on the first of January, 1939, we have seen our Church grow and expand. Today, First Church has a membership of 985. The grand total of gifts made in 1955 was \$80,000. The total expenditures were \$74,943.00.

EPILOGUE

The writer has, in a halting manner, tried to recall some of the highlights of days gone by, calling back to our memory some of the men and women who, through the years have kept alive the life of the little Church which had its birth in 1879 - that the host of almost a thousand members of First Church today may *know* that their Foundation was sure! We have also proudly presented today's state of our Church in part.

All this, that we may keep alive the altar fires of our yesterdays - that they may burn more brightly in our glorious Present, and that their ever-increasing glow may light our Tomorrows with a flame which, please God, shall never grow dim!

MAUD PATTON ANTHONY
1956

FOOTNOTES

¹ Italics were not used in the original manuscript; words to be emphasized were underlined. However, words which the author intended to emphasize will appear in italics in this publication.

² Rev. James Redden Jones is listed in Catawba River Association minutes as "supply minister." He was paid by the Association to preach in Morganton in 1880 and 1881. (from minutes, CRA, 1879 - 1881)

Mrs. Frank (Elizabeth H.) Michaels, in a letter to Jeanne Anthony Dyer, September 30, 1994, contributes more historical information concerning the Rev. J.R. Jones:

From the *Blue Ridge Blade* April 19, 1879, "Sunday, April 27 is the day appointed by Rev. Mr. Jones, the new Baptist minister to preach his first sermon in Morganton."

Later, on November 22, 1879, the *Blue Ridge Blade* reports a news item from the *Piedmont Press*: "Rev. J.R. Jones, pastor of the Baptist Church in this place, has returned from the State Convention and brought that good lady along with him. He was married on the 30th (ult) to Miss Mary D. Chamblee, daughter of Mr. W.B. Chamblee of Wake County. The ceremony took place at the residence of the bride's father and was performed by Rev. W.R. Gwaltney."

³ From author's original text: "In December 1884, we find the following interesting items listed in expenses: Whisenant 20 cents, Hildebran 20 cents, Cox 35 cents, total for wood 75 cents. Again in January, Hildebran 20 cents, Cox 20 cents, Whisenant 10 cents, for wood 50 cents; M.D. Walton 20 cents for wood. February 3, collection for church expenses, 56 cents; on March 2, collection, 10 cents; September 7, collection for church expenses \$1.21. Total collections for church expenses for year 1884 - 1885, \$11.42. On November of 1883 we read "To sexton, balance for last year, \$1.50." On May 27, 1884, "Cash paid for lamp wick, 10 cents;" on May 29, "Cash paid for cleaning church yard, 10 cents." In 1885, the following items appear: May 2, 1/2 gal. oil, 10 cents; June 13, 1/2 gal oil, 10 cents; August 1, mowing church yard, 10 cents; August 22, one lamp chimney, 5 cents; September 26, oil, 15 cents, lamp chimney, 5 cents, total 20 cents; November 16, one pig, \$2.50 on pastor's salary by A. Shull."

⁴ In January of 1916, while Rev. J.R. Williams was the pastor, a stirring revival meeting was held, under the leadership of Dr. J.H. Dew. Many souls were converted. Information from Mrs. Frank (Elizabeth H.) Michaels to Jeanne Anthony Dyer, September 14, 1994, included these descriptive accounts of the meeting:

"John Jacob Michaels (1888 - 1973) who was converted during this 1916 meeting by Dr. Dew and baptized by the Pastor, Rev. J. R. Williams, stated others converted and baptized at that time included Joe Allman, Ted Hogan, Walter McNeilly, Jerome Wortman, Bob Ledbetter and Joe Taylor."

MORGANTON NEWS-HERALD Thursday January 27, 1916

"BAPTIST CHURCH MEETING

Conducted by Dr. J.H. Dew, Assisted by Mrs. Dew in the Singing

Three services are being held each day - store meetings at 10:00 A.M. and services at First Baptist Church at 3:00 and 7:30 P.M. The attendance at the services has been remarkably good, the crowds taxing the capacity of the church, and great interest has been shown.

The store meetings began at Lazarus Brothers on Monday, and were followed by meetings at B.F. Davis and Son Tuesday, the Morganton Hardware on Wednesday and the store of I.I. Davis and Son Thursday morning.

All the services, both at the church and at the stores, have been well attended, and there have been quite a number of conversions and a strengthening of the christian people as a result of the meetings."

(Another item in the same paper:)

"Not only the Baptist church but the entire town is being stirred from center to circumference by the preaching of Dr. J.H. Dew, who has been conducting a meeting at the Baptist Church. Convincing and forceful are his arguments, his explanation of the scripture of telling power, his manner attractive and his messages heart reaching. The services in the stores have been a feature of the meeting; many have been reached by them who would possibly not attend church. Truly a messenger of God, a great preacher is in our midst. And Mrs. Dew, who conducts the singing at the church has proven a great help in the meeting."

MORGANTON NEWS-HERALD Thursday February 3, 1916

"MEETING CLOSED WEDNESDAY NIGHT

A Most Successful Series of Services Concluded at Baptist Church

One of the most successful meetings in the history of the town in point of interest shown, converts, and in the excellency of the preaching and music, was that which came to a close at the First Baptist Church Wednesday night. Rev. J.H. Dew, who has been conducting the services and Mrs. Dew who assisted her husband, left this morning for their home at Ridgecrest. From there he will go in a few days to Jellico, Tennessee.

An estimate of the number converted at the meeting has been placed at two hundred, and it is impossible to number those who have received spiritual refreshment. The town has been greatly stirred by the meeting; everybody is praising Mr. and Mrs. Dew.

The store meetings in the mornings were a novel feature of the services. The places where they were held were always crowded. At the church, the seating capacity was always more than taxed, often numbers having to stand.

The Baptist people are already planning to have Mr. and Mrs. Dew come back for another meeting sometime in the future.

Rev. J.R. Williams, who was the moving spirit in promoting the meeting, and had worked so faithfully, not only for the meeting but during his pastorate here, also deserves warmest praise."

⁵ Exact dates were not available during the writing of Mrs. Anthony's manuscript. However, more exact dates appear in later publications of First Baptist Church, Morganton, N.C.

⁶ Excerpts from recollections of John Jacob Michaels, June 11, 1967, included in a letter from Mrs. Frank (Elizabeth H.) Michaels to Jeanne Anthony Dyer, September 14, 1994:

"I first joined Baraca Class of First Baptist Church a few years after my marriage in 1908 although I had attended church here occasionally before then. Mr. Joe Spainhour was teacher and we met in a curtained off section of the sanctuary. The class members later dug out the basement where the Huffman Class now meets for our class. I was working 12 hours a day at the Burke Tannery and couldn't help dig, so I paid someone to dig for me. Teachers of the Baraca Class during my membership are Joe Spainhour, E.M. Hairfield, Sr., Mr. Cowan, H.G. Eason, R.L. Patton and Eugene Denton.

This church and particularly members of the Baraca Class have meant more to me than I could ever express. I appreciate my many friends and almost hate to single out special ones, but feel I must mention Dr. Rufus Bradshaw, our pastor for several years who has always held a special place in my heart; also Will Berry, Ivey McGimsey and Eugene Denton."

